COASTAL CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

Institutional Effectiveness Report Summary

2009-2010

Office of Institutional Research, Assessment and Analysis

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1. Majors/Concentrations

Working together, the academic colleges, the division of student affairs, and the administrative units use the data collected from internal assessments for continuous improvement and accountability. Internal assessments are either commercially purchased, or locally developed by our faculty and staff. The systematic use of measurement procedures, analyzing and summarizing results, and evaluating and interpreting information from our internal assessments brings change to the institution and lays the foundation for Coastal Carolina University's assessment system. Therefore, our assessment system calls for some if not all of these changes to be guided by data, especially data that are linked to our three major components of assessment: *student learning*, *student development*, and the *operations of our administrative units*. Linking data to change forces us to understand how the nature of change impacts the university.

Marine Science - Bachelor of Science

Students graduating from the Bachelor of Science degree program in Marine Science will be able to successfully pursue entry-level jobs or enter graduate programs in various scientific fields where they will be able to interact and communicate effectively with peers, mentors, and the larger community. Upon graduation, students will be able to explain the principles, concepts, applications, and inter-relations of biology, chemistry, geology, physics, and mathematics, as they apply to the marine environment and use the principles of scientific inquiry to describe, analyze, and solve scientific problems involving marine science and these related fields. Additionally, students will exhibit proficiency in the use of technology, critical thinking, and quantitative tools used in marine science applications.

In order to assess the efficacy of the Marine Science program, various assessment tools were used to measure two specific areas of student development: student competency level and student satisfaction with their education and confidence in their abilities.

Pre- and Post-tests

Student competency was assessed using pre- and post-tests in Marine Science core courses. Comparison on pre- and post-tests in Marine Biology (MSCI 302) show that 82% of students completing the post-test showed an improvement relative to the pre-test. Pre-test results indicate that students began the course with a poor understanding of the student learning outcomes (SLO) focused on primary production, secondary production, major marine community types, and to a lesser extent, marine organism interactions and influence of their environment. Of some concern is that the mean post-test score was only 55%, and only 4 students scored above 70%. Strong gains were noted in most areas of each outcome; with slight declines when it comes to describing major anatomical and physical adaptations and describing anthropological impacts. These declines may be attributed to the inadequate design of pre- and post-test questions (confusing or non-focused questions) or may be the result of information overload throughout the semester.

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Assessment results indicate the following:

The assessment test for MSCI 302 is newly developed and will initially be assessed by instructors. The test will be examined for confusing or non-focused questions as well as insuring that questions capture a true evaluation of student learning in regard to the SLO. The reworded test will be re-administered in the spring semester and results will be used to evaluate the assessment tool and check the validity of these initial results. If results remain consistent, course instructors will evaluate their instructional approach.

The assessment of student mastery of the SLO in these MSCI upper level courses has provided important baseline information for comparison of future assessments of these courses, including assessing if subsequent modified teaching in SLO areas leads to greater student improvement. Information from this assessment is also important in identifying areas of student weakness prior to their entering these courses that may require more instructional time in the course

Marine Science Senior Exit Survey

Student satisfaction with their education and confidence in their abilities was assessed using the Marine Science Senior Exit Survey. This survey measures the students' overall experiences in the marine science program. The survey was administered to graduating seniors during Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 (n=22 and 33, respectively). These results provide valuable insights into students' perceptions of their own abilities upon graduation from the marine science program. They are, however, not a direct assessment of the student's actual abilities in each of these categories.

Questions 1-6 address technological skills, including the ability to operate and maintain instrumentation and sampling gear, collect samples, and use software. Most scored above the 75% target criteria (75% of students ranked their competency as 4, above average, or higher), but question 2 (operate sampling gear) was slightly below the target both semesters, indicating that students are not quite as familiar with basic sampling gear as expected, but are comfortable with other basic instrumentation and with basic software. Question 3 (perform maintenance) was also below the target but unlike the other questions it is not a basic or foundational skill.

Questions 7-15 address quantitative and critical thinking skills. Students scored above the target criteria in their ability to evaluate and solve familiar problems, visualize and understand natural relationships and processes, and use basic algebra skills. They scored below the target criteria in their ability to evaluate and solve unfamiliar problems, to break down complex problems into component parts, to evaluate/solve interdisciplinary problems, and in their statistical and calculus or higher skills. Scores of "poor" were extremely rare, except in question 15 which addresses student competency in math skills well above the requirements for the program. Thus, fewer students felt they excelled in the lower scoring categories, but the vast majority also felt they were competent.

Assessment results indicate the following:

This is a continuing effort begun in Spring 2008. The Department will continue to survey students to expand the data set beyond two years. The students' assessment of their abilities identifies areas that may be best suited for developing a more direct assessment. The department will also participate in college-wide efforts to accomplish a more direct assessment of critical thinking, which includes abilities to logically understand and solve problems.

English – Bachelor of Arts

Students in the English program should be able to demonstrate a mastery of advanced reading, writing, analytical and interpretive techniques suitable for a variety of academic, creative, and professional settings.

In order to assess the efficacy of the English department and the students' ability to write a research essay, the Department of English used a portfolio of student work as a major source of information about the major. Samples of various kinds of student writing are collected from a variety of courses, and these samples are included in their portfolios as part of ENGL 411 English Capstone Seminar. Using an assessment rubric created by the department, the English Assessment Committee then reads and rates the portfolios.

Assessment results indicate the following:

Because this is the first year for using the rubric and for collecting portfolios, it is too early to see any trends, and the small sample size precludes making any general conclusions. It has already been determined that sharing the portfolio rubric with English majors early in their academic career may help improve the results.

• 68.18% of submitted portfolios exceeded or met expectations in terms of integrating research, evidence and data. 22.73% did not meet expectations (5 portfolios) and this category didn't apply to two portfolios.

The English Department also created a rubric for the "blind" assessment of 95 randomly selected student papers from English 101, 102, and 211 courses. The following were not separated according to declared major, so the results represent the writing of a wide variety of majors.

Strengths:
• Integrating quotations - 64% excellent to good
• Summarizing or paraphrasing material from sources - 88% excellent to good
• Establishing a main point, a focus or an argument - 80% consistently to sometimes
• Supports the main point with reasons or evidence - 84% consistently to sometimes
• Organizes and structures the project logically - 66% consistently to sometimes
• Conforms to conventional mechanics, spelling, and grammar - 71% consistently to sometimes
• Chooses appropriate, reliable written sources - 77% consistently to sometimes

Areas for improvement:
• Analyzes source materials - 58% rarely to never
• Synthesizes multiple source materials - 66% rarely to never
• Employs varied sentence structure, effective diction, engaging style - 48% rarely to never
• Responds to and comments on written sources in a knowledgeable way - 61% rarely to never
• Uses sound reasoning to critique written sources - 88% rarely to never

The areas for improvement appear to indicate that higher level thinking skills associated with research writing such as analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating sources are only beginning to mature with freshman. These areas could be more strongly emphasized in future English 101, 102, and 211 courses. These skills do appear to strengthen with English majors by the time they submit portfolios with nearly 70% meeting or exceeding expectations.

Art Studio – Bachelor of Arts

Among other departmental expectations, Art Studio majors are expected to develop technical proficiency and the appropriate theoretical basis for making art in one or more art disciplines. The Department of Visual Arts assessed this student learning outcome through the following methods:

- A portfolio of foundation-level art was submitted for the Sophomore Review, which includes samples from: Drawing I - ARTS 111, Drawing II - ARTS 112, Fundamentals of 2D Design – ARTS 103, and Fundamentals of 3D Design – ARTS 104. This portfolio was assessed through the use of a common rubric.
- A required Senior Exhibit of a body of related art produced by each graduating studio art major in a studio art area of choice. This exhibit was assessed through the use of a common rubric.

Assessment results indicate the following:

In Fall 2008, the weakest performance of the foundation courses was in 2D Design (Arts 103), while the strongest performance of the foundation courses was in Drawing 2 (Arts 112) and the overall strongest performance of the portfolio review was in creativity. In Spring 2009, the weakest performance in the foundation courses was in Drawing 1 (Arts 111), the strongest performance in the foundation courses was in 2D Design (Arts 103), and the overall strongest performance in the portfolio review was in portfolio presentation.

After using the prepared rubric for Arts 297 for the first time (Fall 2008) it was observed lacking in some kind of score/grade equivalent for faculty reference and student interpretation of scores. A modified rubric was made and used in the spring 2009 semester which added a score/grade scale. It was also determined that transfer student identification is needed on the rubric, as some students taking ARTS 297 completed foundation level studio art courses at other colleges and universities.

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As a result of the required Sophomore Review, ARTS 297, the Department of Visual Arts determined that the department needed to coordinate an effort among all faculty members teaching foundation courses in the major to address targeted skills in the classroom that matched the ones identified on the portfolio rubric used in ARTS 297. Workshops will be scheduled to help remind all faculty teaching foundation-level courses of these targeted art and design skills. Also, there was discussion among faculty about using ARTS 297 as the place to inject computer-imaging skills that will serve them well later on in the program. A need for future planning and preparation was identified in the near future to include and assess these computer- imaging skills.

Coastal Carolina University

According to Section 59-101-350, the Commission is responsible for collecting "student scores on professional examinations with detailed information on state and national means, passing scores, and pass rates, as available, and with information on such scores over time, and the number of students taking each exam" from four- and two-year institutions to be included in the annual report to the General Assembly. The Commission on Higher Education also uses this information as the primary source with which to fulfill requirements in Section 59-103-30 for performance funding to collect information on Instructional Quality and Graduates' Achievements by looking at the scores of graduates on post-undergraduate professional, graduate, or employment-related examinations and certification tests.

Examination Period: April 1, 2009 through March 31, 2010.

NAME OF EXAM	Date(s) Administered	# of Examinees	# of Examinees who Passed	% of Examinees who Passed
Praxis Series II: Principles of Learning & Teaching (K-6)	April 2009	4	4	100%
	June 2009	10	8	80%
	July 2009	2	2	100%
	September 2009	8	8	100%
	November 2009	30	25	83%
	January 2010	18	16	89%
	March 2010	38	31	82%
	TOTAL	**110**	**94**	**85%**
Praxis Series II: Principles of Learning & Teaching (5-9)	April 2009	2	2	100%
	July 2009	1	0	0%
	September 2009	2	2	100%
	November 2009	4	3	75%
	January 2010	2	1	50%
	March 2010	11	7	64%
	TOTAL	**22**	**15**	**68%**
Praxis Series II: Principles of Learning & Teaching (7-12)	April 2009	6	6	100%
	June 2009	3	3	100%
	July 2009	2	2	100%
	September 2009	2	1	50%
	November 2009	9	8	89%
	January 2010	10	8	80%
	March 2010	27	19	70%
	TOTAL	**59**	**47**	**80%**
Praxis Series II: PLT Total		**191**	**156**	**82%**
Praxis Series II: Specialty Area Tests	April 2009	53	52	98%
	June 2009	45	44	98%
	July 2009	77	72	94%
	September 2009	79	73	92%
	November 2009	22	20	91%
	January 2010	19	18	95%
	March 2010	55	46	84%
Praxis Series II: Specialty Area Total	**TOTAL**	**350**	**325**	**93%**
PRAXIS SERIES II OVERALL TOTAL	**TOTAL**	**541**	**481**	**89%**